

**Remarks for the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Subcommittee Member Day**

Congressman Peter J. Visclosky

March 26, 2019

I would like to thank Chairman Price, Ranking Member Diaz-Balart, and all of the members of the House Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee for holding today's hearing and providing this opportunity for myself and all members to speak about priorities for your Subcommittee in Fiscal Year 2020.

My priority for your Subcommittee in Fiscal Year 2020 remains my resolute support for the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Capital Investment Grant program. This essential program supports transit projects across our country, including the expansion and recapitalization of the South Shore Rail Line in Northwest Indiana.

Your Subcommittee has demonstrated its steadfast support for this program and I am grateful for your action. Because of your good work, communities across our nation can continue to plan and move forward with the FTA for projects that are in the early phases of development.

Unfortunately, as we approach Fiscal Year 2020 legislation, we face a similar scenario as we did a year ago.

Once again, the Administration has proposed cutting the Capital Investment Grant program in FY 2020. This year, by roughly \$1 billion as compared to Fiscal Year 2019. While it is somewhat encouraging that the administration included some funding for new grant agreements, the administration's request of \$1.5 billion is wholly inadequate in supporting key transformational investments in our transportation infrastructure.

Chairman Price, Ranking Member Diaz-Balart, and members of the Subcommittee, I respectfully ask that you again flatly reject the inadequate funding level proposed in the Fiscal Year 2020 budget request.

I also would like to thank the Subcommittee for including language in the Fiscal Year 2018 and the Fiscal Year 2019 Consolidated Appropriations Acts that requires the FTA to obligate appropriated monies to the Capital Investment Grant program. However, while the FTA has until the end of Calendar Year 2019 to obligate FY 2018 funding, it is my understanding that they have not yet done so. I would ask that the Subcommittee continue to include language to ensure that the prerogatives of the U.S. Congress are adhered to under Article I of the U.S. Constitution and appropriate funding is obligated to all qualified projects.

The Capital Investment Grant program is an integral component of creating economic growth in communities across our nation. I believe that people today, when considering where they want to live, work, or raise a family, are looking at public transportation options. When businesses are considering where they want to locate, and where they think vibrant new employees and markets exist, they are looking at public transportation options. When individuals and families are considering what they want to do this weekend, they are looking at events and attractions that have close proximity to public transportation options.

The investment to improve and expand the South Shore Rail Line in Northwest Indiana is but one example of the vast benefits that this program provides to communities throughout our nation. We have made great strides in Northwest Indiana because of the bipartisan commitment

from local officials, state officials, businesses, and non-profit organizations. And we cannot allow this progress to go for naught.

I believe that through the Capital Investment Grant program we are creating a model in Northwest Indiana for how to maximize the potential of taxpayer dollars and make transformational investments that will grow regional economies. I want people to be able to look at Northwest Indiana and say this is how we garner bipartisan support from all levels of the community and the federal government, and this is how we create a return on public transit investments. This is how we attract new people, new businesses, and new jobs through public transportation infrastructure investments, and this is how we improve the lives of all current residents in a community and for future generations.

Despite overwhelming, bipartisan commitment from state and local leaders, this type of transformation does not happen without Congressional support. Therefore, I again thank this Subcommittee for your leadership, for your demonstrated value for the Capital Investment Grant program, and again ask for your continued robust support for this critical program in Fiscal Year 2020.